

November 2011

From the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism (SEAS)

The SEAS Monitor

Dear Friends,

I hope you are well. This is the November issue of “The SEAS Monitor.” It covers my activities during the month of November. The Monitor is a way for me to keep you informed about my work as the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism. Please click here for [previous copies](#).

Please enjoy and keep in touch.

Warm regards,
Hannah

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EVENTS:

“The Rescuers” Documentary Screening

My entire office viewed the documentary “The Rescuers,” which details the diplomats during World War II who saved Jews from death – often in violation of their governments’ policies. It was a very profound film. We were so impressed that we are planning a follow-up series of discussions internally within the Department of State, with the diplomatic corps in Washington, DC, and possibly with the public. I was fortunate to be in London in mid-November and was able to meet with Sir Martin Gilbert to discuss this film, described under the International Outreach section.

“Nuremburg: Its Lessons for Today”

The Office of War Crimes Issues at the Department of State hosted an “International Justice on the Big Screen” Panel Discussion on the film “Nuremburg: Its Lessons for Today.” Professor John Barrett of St. John’s University explained that the impact of the trial was the use of incontrovertible evidence. The decision of the Allies to prosecute was made without full knowledge of the extent of Nazi crimes. During the trial, a great deal was documented and learned about the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities. An interesting historical footnote was that the United States Government did not show the film “Nuremburg: Its Lessons for Today” in the U.S. because the Cold War had us focusing on new enemies (the Soviet Union) rather than old enemies (Nazi Germany).

The War Department reviewed the film in 1947, and in 1948, Justice Jackson pushed for a public viewing of the film here, without success. The film was released in Germany, however, as part of the reconstruction and de-Nazification efforts. Only in more recent times has it been made available to view in the U.S. Stephen Rapp, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, addressed the subjective nature of tribunals such as Nuremburg, where only a limited number of people were chosen to face trial. The U.S. prosecutes the worst criminals to set an example, to deter future crimes, because it is impossible to prosecute everyone.

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH:

Journalists at Meridian House

I welcomed a day-long program, “U.S. - European Best Practices Exchange” on the role of broadcast media in promoting social cohesion on Monday, November 7, at Meridian House in Washington, DC. Diversity in media, ethnic media, building bridges among communities monitoring media extremism, among others, were some of the topics covered. Speakers came from a wide range of backgrounds, from academia to NGOs focused on inclusion, diversity in human resources, and media to media outlets themselves. The participants came from diverse ethnic backgrounds from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK.

London



I travelled to the UK, Lithuania, and Estonia in mid-November, supported by my assistant, Adela Levis. In London, we met with Mike Whine, Director of **Community Security Trust (CST)**. We discussed the state of Muslim-Jewish relations, security training, and interfaith efforts. We also talked about the need for enhanced teacher training in terms of combating anti-Semitism. While CST believes Holocaust education in the UK is one of the finest in the world, 65 percent of Jewish children go to Jewish schools and do not therefore interact with students of other religions—this demonstrates the need for education about Judaism. I was concerned to learn that despite government

efforts to stop the use of Saudi textbooks in Islamic schools in Britain, Whine told us that they continued to be utilized. As a result, the CST is working to teach school inspectors how to discover hate-speech in schools.

Joined by my frequent collaborator, Farah Pandith, the Special Representative to Muslim Communities, we met with Simon Cohen of **Global Tolerance**, which he started eight years ago to train journalists and faith groups how to relate to each other. Global Tolerance is not associated with any one religious group; it works with organizations, social media activists, and religious groups to merge commercial and tolerance agenda. He was very interested in hearing about *2011 Hours Against Hate*. We discussed where we see the initiative going next year, and how youth and faith groups can carry the message and lead the effort outside of governments. We look forward to working with him to expand this campaign and collaborating on Global Tolerance efforts.

We also met with Ned Wills of **Laureus Sport for Good Foundation**, to introduce him to *2011 Hours Against Hate* and encourage the Laureus athletes to condemn hate in sports. We encouraged them to record a video condemning hate which they could post on their website and we would post on the *2011 Hours Against Hate* website.

Meeting with members of the **Tony Blair Faith Foundation**, we were pleased with their interest in partnering with us on *2011 Hours Against Hate*, and we hope to continue to collaborate in the future.

One of the highlights of our London trip was presenting on *2011 Hours Against Hate* with Farah on November 14 at the **International Social Innovation and Social Action Faith Conference** held at Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Our session was entitled “Social Action: Combating Hatred Together.” This high-profile interfaith event attracted participants from Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East and aimed to move forward the concept of cooperation through social action and new social innovation models—the ideal place to highlight *2011 Hours Against Hate* and help it advance into 2012.

Following our presentation, we met with sports organizations, interfaith groups, civil society and the **London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games**. We met with: AJDC, UK Football Association, Olympic Committee (LOCOG), CEDAR Muslim Network, Three Faiths Forum, Institute for Strategic

Dialogue, Faiths Forum for London, Farazan Hakim, More Than Gold, Runnymede Trust, Jewish Social Action Forum, Hindu Forum UK, Tony Blair Faith Foundation, John Paul II Sports Foundation. After explaining *2011 Hours Against Hate*, Farah and I asked if they would all pledge hours—fans and volunteers together—and ask the athletes to spread the message of *2011 Hours Against Hate*.

We also asked how their organizations would like to get involved with us, while encouraging them to make it their own, noting there is more power when people stand behind it. We have already had follow-up teleconferences and are excited about the potential for this being captured by the energy surrounding the 2012 Olympics. We are hoping for an effort by the athletes and fans alike.



Meeting with Sir Martin Gilbert and Esther Gilbert

The other highlight was meeting with **Sir Martin Gilbert** and his wife, Esther Gilbert. Sir Martin is the renowned historian featured in *The Rescuers* documentary, described in the beginning of this *Monitor*. We discussed our interest in building a program around it for the State Department, as well as how to get it shown to American and other diplomats around the world.

Lithuania

International Conference on Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism



Our next stop was Lithuania. The Government of Lithuania has made strenuous efforts to come to terms with its role in the Holocaust. The Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited me to be a panellist at the **International Academic Conference “Tolerance and Totalitarianism—Challenges to Freedom”** on November 16. Lithuania’s Foreign Minister, Audronius Azubalis, opened the conference by noting that Lithuanians are defined by those who believe in freedom, and how human values are more important than false promises among nations. I agree with the Foreign Minister’s comment that tolerance and freedom requires those who care to be able to work toward it. In this new democracy, it is impressive that top governmental leaders are dedicated to spending such critical time, energy and resources to highlight the importance of fighting anti-Semitism and other human rights abuses as essential to a successful democracy.

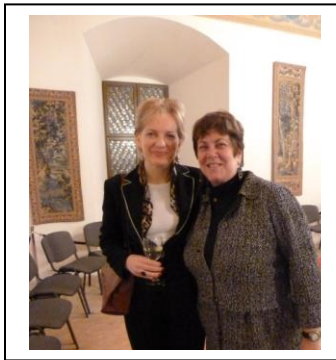


Foreign Minister Azubalis



Talking to Tolerance Center director Markas Zingeris event reception

The other distinguished speakers at this conference raised concerns about new forms of totalitarianism prevailing in the former Soviet Union today, with specific reference to the anti-immigrant movements there. Lithuanian academics and experts urged tolerance, and moving away from nationalism and better integrating the different groups into the national fabric of Lithuania. The representative from the Jewish community stressed the importance of education, particularly to teach about those who saved Jews during the Holocaust, including naming streets after them, so that everyone learns from an early age what anti-Semitism is and what righteous people did in the face of hatred. Another, Professor Jevgenij Dikij, talked about freedom of religion and acceptance of different ethnic groups. We heard from Priest Julius Sasnauskas about how important it is to learn about and connect with people of other religions. As we well know, it is difficult but imperative to teach and practice tolerance and respect.



When I spoke, I focused on my view of success: when non-Jews speak out against anti-Semitism and Jews speak out on behalf of others. I stressed the fundamental lesson of the Holocaust that it shows what is possible, and how the whole world must respond when there is unchecked hatred. As I noted before, the current Lithuanian government has dealt with their history recently and maturely. I also congratulated Lithuania on its chairmanship of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), especially because the OSCE has tried to move forward on the tolerance issue. But it takes more than just talking about the subject. We need to take action—we must write respect into our laws, constitutions, and our classrooms.



The next day, I visited [Panevezys](#) and its **Jewish community** as well as a public school. This community was established in 1991, and it had to search hard for its origins, yet it has created educational programs with schools there so that the lessons of the Holocaust are not forgotten. I toured the “Mourning Jewish Mother” memorial, and a theater which had been built out of Jewish gravestones (the intention was to “recycle” the material; it is not a memorial). Afterwards, I met with staff and students at **Panevezys High School** for the opening of an exhibit on Jewish buildings. In its small museum, we saw the Nazi records of the deportations, with entire families, three generations at a time, listed for extermination.



[Estonia](#)



I met with many members of the [Jewish Community in Tallinn](#): the rabbi, school director, board members, community members. I learned that the Estonian Jewish high school was built in 1924 and after several decades not being allowed to operate by the Soviets, in 1990 it was one of first buildings to be given back to the Jewish community. Alla Jakobson, the head of the Jewish community, assured me that they feel accepted by the greater community and government; she noted that

government officials have come to light the candles during Chanukah. The younger members of the gathered communities told me of concerns they have about the increase in the number of young people coming to the annual commemoration of the Waffen SS event. While their students learn about Holocaust, they do not necessarily learn about what happened in Estonia, rather they visit Holocaust sites in other countries. I was also able to tour the museum and synagogue in Tallinn.

[Albania to build Holocaust Memorial](#)

[Last month](#), I reported on a Holocaust memorial to be built in Tirana. I would like to note that The Albania Holocaust Memorial was proposed by Chairman Warren Miller and is being built by the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad and expects to dedicate the memorial in the spring.

[MEDIA:](#)

[Conversations with America](#)



On November 9, the anniversary of Kristallnacht, I appeared on *Conversations with America* with Elisa Massimino, President and CEO of Human Rights First. During this live-streamed event, we discussed the recent trends in anti-Semitism around the world. Watch it [here](#).

[Anniversary of Kristallnacht](#)

Also on November 9, I released a video, "[Remembering Kristallnacht: 73 Years Later,](#)" and an editorial in the Miami Herald, "[Day of sorrow, and Commemoration,](#)" in which I reflect on the lessons learned from Kristallnacht – one of which is to speak out when one witnesses acts of hate. My video was shared on U.S. Embassy Facebook pages in more than a dozen countries, predominately in Europe and Latin America.

[Interview with *The Jewish Chronicle* \(UK\)](#)

During my visit to London in mid-November, I was interviewed by *The Jewish Chronicle*, read widely not only in the UK but also throughout Europe's Jewish community. I was asked about the *2011 Hours Against Hate* campaign, my job fighting anti-Semitism, and the Occupy Wall Street movement. Please read the article here: [Occupy Wall Street 'not racist'](#).

[Rumi Forum Luncheon Speaker Series](#)



When I returned to Washington, I spoke at the Luncheon Speaker Series hosted by the Rumi Forum on November 22, together with Special Representative Pandith, on the topic of hatred. The program was recorded and can be found on the Rumi Forum's [website](#), with videos and links to local area cable channels that broadcast the program.

Wisconsin National Public Radio



On November 29, Special Representative to Muslim Communities Farah Pandith and I talked about our 2011 Hours Against Hate campaign on “Here on Earth: Radio without Borders” (www.hereonearth.org), a live, cultural affairs and global news call-in program and podcast broadcast on Wisconsin Public Radio, and hosted by Jean Feraca.

The show tries to forge local-global connections, and create a conversation about global citizenship and responsibility. It also tries to bring positive news to its listeners, and runs live, so that listeners are involved in the conversation.

Farah and I became part of WPR’s ongoing series called “Inside Islam,” devoted to challenging stereotypes and misconceptions of Islam and Muslims. In addition to the radio show, we also host an Inside Islam blog (<http://insideislam.wisc.edu/>). It was an interesting and informative hour – it seemed like the show really hit a note with many listeners. Listeners called in from around the U.S. and we were able to discuss the Albanian singular record as the only Muslim-majority country in Europe and the only country to save every one of its Jews from extermination. The show can be found at: http://wpr.org/hereonearth/archive_111129k.cfm.

DOMESTIC OUTREACH:

Jewish Federation of Austin

On November 1, I met with the Jewish Federation of Austin. I shared my observations of the trends in anti-Semitism around the world and the Administration’s importance of fighting anti-Semitism.

Chicago

I spoke at an event hosted by the **Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)** in Chicago on November 10 about global trends in anti-Semitism. The program, “The Arab Spring and The Challenges of Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial in the Arab and Muslim World,” also featured Israel’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Ron Prosor and MEMRI founder and president Yigal Carmon. I also met with **Frankel Family Foundation** leaders and leaders of the **Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago**.

New York City



Special Envoy Rosenthal addressing the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and talking with participants following her remarks

On November 21, I briefed board members and the leadership of expatriate Jewish communities in New York City at the **Jewish Community Relations Council of New York** at a breakfast meeting. Following that, I participated in “**Messaging to Remember – the Future of Holocaust Education**,” a conference that brought together international scholars to examine the past sixty years of Holocaust education in Europe and the United States and to talk about ways to develop new ways to teach future generations. I spoke on a panel after the showing of the documentary film *Auf Wiedersehen, Til We Meet Again* about its connection to my work. I highlighted this film in the [May/June 2011 issue](#) of the Monitor.



Speaking on a panel at the Future of Holocaust Education Conference

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

Commissioner General of UNRWA

The Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Filippo Grandi, visited the State Department on November 3. The Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration hosted a working lunch to discuss Holocaust education in the human rights curriculum in 691 UNWRA schools. To date, the teachers' union has refused to teach about the Holocaust "because it will confuse the children." Grandi assured me that many steps are being taken to provide comprehensive Holocaust education.

Meeting with Hungary's Deputy Foreign Minister



On November 2, I met with Hungarian Deputy Foreign Minister Németh, who informed me of Hungary's desire to hold a joint commemoration of the centennial anniversary of Raoul Wallenberg's birth at the U.S. Department of State. Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat who rescued thousands of Jews from Nazi-occupied Hungary.

The Hungarian delegation informed me that there will be several events the Hungarians will be hosting throughout 2012, both at home and abroad. For example, they plan to hold events to bring attention to the date of his disappearance and the March of the Living, which is scheduled to take place on Hungarian Holocaust Day. I told the delegation that I was pleased that they would rekindle the memory of his courageous and noble acts. I believe that through such events, we will be able to remind others not only of the tragedy of the Holocaust, but also of the courage of the characters of those who took terrible risks in order to do the right thing.

[Meeting with Estonian Ambassador to the U.S.](#)



On November 23, I met with Estonia's Ambassador to the U.S., Marina Kaljurand. She was very interested in hearing about my trip to Estonia the previous week with Eli Rosenbaum from the Department of Justice to protest Estonia's recent decision not to prosecute Nazi war criminal, Mikhel (Michael) Gorshkow. The Government of Estonia repeatedly has refused to prosecute Nazi-era accused war criminals, and the Department of State is committed to ensuring that this issue is prosecuted, before the perpetrators die.

[Meeting with Norway's Ambassador to the U.S.](#)



At the end of the month, I met with Norwegian Ambassador Wegger Chr. Strømme on November 28. Ambassador Strømme has spent time in Israel and is familiar with the wide range of opinions in the Jewish community. He shared his impressions of Norway's Jewish community and he explained the results of a recent school survey, which has the Norwegian government working on an educational plan to combat anti-Semitism. A wider survey of the population is now underway, and Ambassador Strømme suggested that I should visit Norway after the results are reported in late February. We also discussed joint projects such as the UNRWA Holocaust education initiative, and how to teach tolerance in light of the aftermath of the domestic terror attack in Oslo this summer.

[Sweden: Raoul Wallenberg 2012 Commemoration](#)



On November 28 I also met with Olle Wastberg, the Swedish government's coordinator for "Raoul Wallenberg 2012," accompanied by Eva Bergquist, Cultural Counselor. They explained Sweden's plans for the 100th birthday commemoration of Raoul Wallenberg, in Sweden and around the world. Raoul Wallenberg was among the righteous diplomats saving Jews from extermination during the Holocaust. I am very supportive of this program. I envision holding an event for the Department and diplomatic community next year.

[Training](#)

In keeping with my efforts to raise the profile of monitoring and combating anti-Semitism in the Department of State, I met with desk officers from the European Affairs Bureau in November to discuss reporting of anti-Semitic and hate speech as well as other hate crimes in Europe. The desk officers were interested in how European countries often make hate speech illegal, whereas in the United States, hate speech is protected under freedom of speech. They were curious as to how to approach this, and I told them we need to expose and condemn hate speech and hate crimes swiftly and strongly every time they occur. The other area of interest was how to tell when anti-Israel sentiment crosses over into anti-Semitism and Hannah discussed this at length.

[Intern visit to Holocaust Museum](#)



I sponsored a third trip for State Department interns to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) on November 9. Arthur Berger, Director of External Communications, introduced the group of close to 20 to the museum. He discussed how the USHMM remembers the Nazi torture, brutality, and genocide of six million Jews and as many as five million other non-combatants. After his introduction, the interns had a few hours to explore the museum.

[INTERNET OUTREACH:](#)

[Facebook](#)

I encourage you to “Like” my page on Facebook: “Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism.” When you “Like” a page on Facebook, it will be listed under your “Activities and Interests” tab, which can be found in your Info section. If my page is updated, the update will appear on your News Feed on your homepage.

Be sure to follow our weekly posting entitled “Here’s What We’re Hearing: Anti-Semitism News Updates.” It is through these updates that we monitor global incidents around of anti-Semitism. We have also started a new initiative, “Here’s What We’re Hearing: Jewish World News Updates” which contain relevant news regarding positive efforts to promote tolerance and inter-religious cooperation.

Instructions:

Once you are signed into Facebook, search for my name and title: Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism. The “Like” button is at the top of my page and has a thumbs-up symbol. The symbol disappears once you have “Liked” the page.


[State.gov](#)

Aside from following me on Facebook, I encourage all of you to visit my page on the Department of State’s website. You can quickly find my page by clicking [here](#). Or you can follow these instructions: Begin by going to the Department of State’s homepage: www.state.gov. Then, please click on the “Democracy and Global Affairs” tab in the white toolbar. Then, please click on “Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL),” and then click on “Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism” in the left vertical column. Here you will information about my office, as well as remarks, press releases, past issues of *The Monitor*, photos, and information about the *2011 Hours Against Hate* campaign.

[HumanRights.gov](#)

I also encourage you to visit HumanRights.gov, which is the US government’s official website for human rights related information. You can access the homepage [here](#), and you can access my personal page [here](#).

[Twitter](#)

Please also follow me on twitter! You can find me at:  [@HannahAtState](https://twitter.com/HannahAtState).